



## Meeting Minutes

### Public Meeting #3

#### Erie Harbor Enhancements Phase 2 (EHE2) / Genesee Gateway Park / #192800048

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Date/Time: April 14, 2021 / 6:00 – 7:15PM

Place: Zoom Online Meeting

Next Meeting: TBD

Attendees: Project Team: Jeff Mroczek (City), Amanda Phetteplace (Stantec), Thomas Palumbo (Stantec),  
 Public: Alvin Lomibao (SWPC)  
 Bill Collins – Reconnect Rochester  
 Bob Williams  
 Gene DePrez - Resident at The Nathaniel  
 Glynis Valenti - Director at South Wedge Planning Committee  
 Jayne Morgan  
 Judy Hay - NBN6  
 Karen Lankeshofer – Henrietta, NY  
 Kelvin Knight - Administrator Southeast Neighborhood Service Center  
 Lisa Reagan – NBN6, SWPC, South Wedge Resident  
 Marcia Reaver  
 Paul Minor  
 Judy Bennett  
 Renee Marshall-Gross - President Hamilton Apts  
 Susan L – Reconnect Rochester  
 Tony  
 Tom Morgan  
 John Lam - Reconnect Rochester and resident South Wedge

Absentees: N/A

Distribution: Project Team, PAC, City of Rochester Project Website

**This document was prepared with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.**

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## **Meeting Minutes:**

### **1. Introduction (6:05)**

Jeff Mroczek (City of Rochester) greeted the attendees and outlined the Zoom meeting format. He re-introduced the project team and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

### **2. Presentation (6:10)**

Amanda Phetteplace (Stantec) reoriented attendees to the project, reviewed meetings to date, outlined the activity and progress since the last public meeting on 10/30/2019. She reviewed the masterplan and went into detail regarding what was included in Phase 2 of the project. Erie Harbor Enhancements Phase 2 includes improvements to the southern (passive) park area, and the northern (active) park area. The southern area has improvements limited to removals of deteriorating paths and trees, new tree plantings, earthwork, path reconstruction and the addition of a picnic area with tables and grills. The northern park area improvements include demolition of existing plaza and pathways, tree removals, a new basketball court, playground, hand carry boat launch and new park entry sign. The proposed asphalt Genesee Gateway Walk will connect the river and Genesee Riverway Trail to Mt. Hope. A new walkway will be provided to The Hamilton, with the existing benches, pet waste station and bike rack saved and re-installed. New benches, picnic tables, grills, bike racks, bike repair station, trash receptacles and lighting will be provided for the park as well.

Thomas Palumbo (Stantec) reviewed the Genesee Riverway Trail temporary detour for construction. Tom also described the alternate items that may be added to the project as budget allows. Alternates include river railing rehabilitation, entry signage mosaic, property boundary markers, gateway markers, picnic tables at The Hamilton, ROC Scramble boulder feature, Playground terrace boulders and linear boulders in the north area of the park. The alternatives were not presented in any order of preference or priority. Tom also reviewed the project schedule going forward.

Jeff Mroczek (City of Rochester) reviewed how attendees could ask questions and provided contact information if additional questions arose. Questions and/or comments will be accepted for one week after today's meeting. He also stated that the slide presentation from the meeting will be posted on the City's website.

### **3. Questions and Comments (6:45)**

**Question:** In the green zone, will one of the parallel trails be designated for pedestrians and one for cyclists?

**Response:** The green (middle) zone being referred to is from slide 5 of 29 of the presentation. The red (south) and blue (north) zones are the areas that will be constructed as part of the current project. The green zone will not be touched as part of the current project – with the potential exception of river rail painting and boundary marker installation (both bid alternates). The trail is presently split into two zones – the mainline 10' wide asphalt Genesee Riverway Trail (GRT) that passes through the entire park and intended for all users (including cyclists and pedestrians) and the concrete sidewalk directly along the riverfront is intended for pedestrians. The only section of the GRT that will be rebuilt as part of the present project is in the blue (north) zone and it will be widened to 12'. Future phases of Master Plan implementation would widen the remainder of the GRT to match the 12' width and includes smaller scale pedestrian parallel paths.

**Question:** Is the trail detour during construction or more permanent?

**Question:** Can the detour be changed to west side as soon as sidewalk work is done, so that we don't have people taking their lives in their hands unnecessarily? Meaning west side of Mt Hope, not west side of river...

**Question:** Why take the trail detour across Mt. Hope. There is a sidewalk on the west side.

**Response:** The trail detour as shown will only be in place during construction of the project. The detour moves users to the east side of Mt. Hope Avenue because a portion of the sidewalk on Mt. Hope Ave across from

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Alexander St will be reconstructed as part of the project and will not be passable. The City design and construction team will work with the selected contractor to minimize the duration of the Mt. Hope Ave crossings.

**Question:** How often will the waste cans be emptied?

**Question:** Has DES been consulted on accessing the trash bin for easy emptying?

**Response:** The waste cans will be emptied by DES Parks Maintenance as part of their routine duties. They will be emptied twice a week. If a park user notices full trash bins, they can call 311 to report the issue and maintenance staff will be notified.

**Question:** The trees at the South end are currently in good shape if you look at it today. They are fully leafed out. Suckers and ivy should be removed. I'll be happy to send pictures from this week of the trees.

**Response:** The design team committed to keeping the trees. Jeff followed up with City Forestry and they will schedule the trees for pruning, sucker removal and to remove the evergreen vine from the one tree.

**Question:** If prices come in too high, what would you cut?

**Question:** How do we express our opinion about the alternate bid prioritization? Or was the list the prioritization?

**Response:** The design team intends to bid the project with a base bid that we are confident will come in under budget and have detailed a list of bid alternates that can be added to the project as funding allows. The alternates, listed in approximate order of priority, is as follows:

- Select River Railing Rehabilitation
- Linear Boulders in Northern Park
- ROC Scramble Boulder Feature
- Playground Terrace Boulder Feature
- Entry Signage Mosaic
- Gateway Markers
- Property Boundary Markers
- Picnic Tables at The Hamilton

**Question:** Where are the bathrooms? This isn't the first project built in this area without a plan for how kids will use the bathroom.

**Question:** Outhouses. Go rustic?

**Response:** We recognize that bathrooms would be a useful addition to this, and many, of our parks. However, due to the cost of their construction (\$300,000-\$500,000) and operation and maintenance requirements they are typically only provided in larger regional parks. The plan does reserve a space for a future building that could include restrooms as well as a small retail operation for canoe/kayak/bicycle rental, ice cream shop, or other retail operation that would support the adjacent park, trail, and riverfront use. Another possibility would be to incorporate restrooms, rental, retail into any future development on the 151 Mt. Hope parcel.

**Question:** What's the parking plan for boat launch? How does this relate to 151 Mt Hope?

**Question:** Have you considered taking 10-20 ft, from 151?

**Question:** Will there be any parking for the park? The parking area behind Spectrum that is being used for Skatepark parking is close by. Is that now official public access parking?

**Response:** We recognize the need for parking to support the park, farmers market and the hand carried boat launch (including a drop off area). We have developed a conceptual layout (visible on the Master Plan) that would utilize a portion of the 151 Mt. Hope parcel to provide access, waterfront drop-off area and parking. This would be developed as part of the next phase of park improvements. The access, drop-off and parking were designed in such a way to best serve the park and minimize the impact to any future development on the 151 parcel. The parking area behind Spectrum (north end of the site) is a private facility and should not be being used for the skate park. However, the parcel that the northern parking lot is on was sold to Spectrum (previously Time Warner) in the late 1980's. The sale included use of a specific number of parking spots for use by the public for access to the Genesee Riverway Trail. Public use is limited to specific hours to not interfere with Spectrum's

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business operations. The City is presently developing a plan to provide signage directing the public to the available parking (including notification of acceptable hours of use).

**Question:** How many benches will be facing the river?

**Response:** There are 5 benches on the riverfront and several other benches along the walkway between the river and Mt Hope, 4 being reinstalled at the Hamilton Tower and picnic tables adjacent the playground/basketball court and in the southern area. Grills will also be included in the north and south zones.

**Question:** At our last meeting and on page 8 of your presentation it shows access route and drop off and parking for boat launch and farmers market. But, has the City not told you that they are considering a no RFP bid of 151 Mt Hope to the FDFI (Frederick Douglas Family Initiatives) in the next month? FDFI says they are planning a 200,000 sq. ft building there.

**Response:** We are aware that the FDFI is working with the City to find a location for their proposed museum/facility but not that they were looking at 151 Mt. Hope or that they had a defined facility size. Jeff subsequently met with the City NBD, Real Estate and Legal team coordinating with the FDFI project. FDFI has been made aware of the access, parking and turn around space requirements and has committed to incorporating these needs in their project.

**Question:** Has someone reviewed your plan for ADA access at the boat launch and playground (e.g., uneven ground, climbing access, step barriers, etc.)

**Response:** All projects that we design, including this one, meet or exceed present ADA accessibility guidelines. The boat launch was designed in consultation with Matrix Engineering that has specialization in waterfront design and engineering. The playground was designed in consultation with Earthscape, a custom design and fabrication firm with worldwide design and installation experience.

**Question:** Are seated areas to be lit for late night use?

**Response:** There are lights along the existing Genesee Riverway Trail and waterfront. Existing lights within the area of impact will be replaced and additional lighting will be added to the east/west path connect Mt Hope Ave to the river. The lighting will be low energy consumption LED with photo-controls meeting the latest City lighting standards. This is a City park and thus subject to the same operating hours as all City parks (dawn to dusk). The lighting is being provided for security / safety purposes and is not intended to encourage park use in "late night" hours or after closure.

**The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM**

**The following are comments received after the live Zoom meeting:**

**Comment:** Per the public meeting, comments, and subsequent emails we (SWPC) want to acknowledge the important components of the project that are now included:

- The public boat launch for hand-carry vessels along the Genesee River Trail so people in the vicinity can access the river for recreation and so first responder teams can gain quick access to emergency and distress incidents closer to the falls
- A larger, updated playground for a range of ages and abilities
- Signage that clearly denotes access points and directions to river trail activities
- Transplanting trees and adding trees to increase the greenery and decrease noise and pollution throughout the park
- The addition of seating along the river trail and the north and south parks
- Retaining the north patio area next to the Hamilton Tower, which so many tower residents use

In March, SWPC met with representatives from the City and the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives organization regarding a proposal for a large non-RFP project at 151 Mount Hope Ave. On Thursday, April 22, the FDFI will be presenting a more cohesive proposal to the public, but if all of the activities they mentioned will be taking place on a

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parcel that is under two acres in size, we are concerned about how this project would affect and/or tie into the Erie Harbor Enhancements.

Since the City owns both Genesee Gateway Park and 151 Mount Hope and would retain ownership for an FDFI project, the City should be able to ensure public access to the river and parking for trail and park use by extending the Enhancements project into 151 as presented on the plans in December and last week. SWPC sees this access as vital to the success of the long-standing, multi-million-dollar Erie Harbor project and to the safety of those visiting and using the trail and river.

Four years ago, SWPC, Rochester Housing Charities, and the City of Rochester spent months hosting public meetings to gather input on possibilities for 151 Mount Hope. City NBD presented ideas from other cities and encouraged outdoor gathering possibilities and opportunities for economic development connected to the river and trail. It was clear that residents saw it as public space to be used for celebrating and enjoying the riverway. Priorities included sightlines to the river, ease of access to the trail and river, and public parking—all of which are currently included in the Erie Harbor plans—among the backdrop of activities and businesses at 151 that would enhance the river trail experience.

We would urge the consideration of this community input as the Phase II project continues and as the City entertains uses and proposals for 151 Mount Hope.

#### **Comments:**

1. I would estimate that almost no one will use the trail detour as currently proposed. Pedestrians and cyclists will not want to cross the street twice- they are much more likely to walk alongside the construction barriers (into the travelled right of way) and then onto the west sidewalk when it opens up. PLEASE consider blocking off part of Mt. Read with jersey barriers during the west sidewalk construction, and then having the detour use the west sidewalk.
2. Similarly, almost no one will use the canoe/kayak boat launch unless a drop off circle and parking are installed. To me, this must be part of the project or the boat launch will be sitting there unused- a waste of money.

#### **Comments:**

Thank you for the effort you have put into the development of the Erie Harbor Enhancement Phase II Project. The community has been adamant about several items to be included in the overall plan and we are gratified the items have been included:

- Public Access to both this parcel and 151 Mt. Hope have been in the community's wishes since Time Warner moved its headquarters into the neighborhood.
- A public boat launch into the Genesee River so residents can have easy access for low impact active recreation.
- Carefully placed benches throughout the plan so residents and visitors can enjoy the view of the Genesee River or see their children at play, or simply to enjoy the scenery.
- Repair of the metal railings to preserve City taxpayer investment
- The design of the playground that meets the need for a variety of children's ages from 2-12
- Basketball court, grills, picnic area, bike racks
- New lighting
- Retention of the patio for the residents of Hamilton Apartments
- Clear accessible pathways and lawn
- The planting of new trees throughout the South and North ends
- New gateway signs that point people to the Public access River trail and the new active and passive park components

We appreciate the care and community engagement to develop this project. However, a more detailed drawing of the boat launch, seating and board walk would have enhanced the presentation on April 14th. It was clear from the presentation the playground had well developed sketches, while the boat launch did not.

What remains insufficient is the access road for the boat launch and parking. The illustrations submitted to the site plan review on page 2 shows a road entering near the Spectrum Drive and going along Mt. Hope, and then up the North side of

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151 Mt. Hope with parking all along it to the public safety access and boat launch drop off. It is specifically denominated shared parking area/hand carry launch parking and car-top launch loading zone at the West side next to the river trail.

Since the City owns both parcels, the City has the capacity to set aside a portion of 151 Mt. Hope for the access road and parking or extend the park by those dimensions. The remainder could be open for some type of development that compliments both the Erie Harbor Enhancement Phase II and the river trail.

Members of the community have met, at the City's request, with people from the Frederick Douglass Initiative. That group is proposing to build a 200,000 square Museum on 151 Mt. Hope. A development of even half that size, while it may be worthy, could eliminate the access road and public parking for Erie Harbor Park and the river trail. The Hamilton apartments is a 150,000 square foot project; thus one can readily see that the proposed Frederick Douglass Museum could encompass the entire parcel at 151 Mt. Hope with both the building and related parking for the proposed Museum, restaurant, lecture hall, meeting/community rooms, and theatre and obliterate sight lines to the river. Even shared parking for a proposed use like that will could preclude regular boat launch and Farmers Market parking while the FDFI events, classes, or any significant use is in process. If people can't count on access, they will be less likely to plan to use it. The city and community have spent several years in seeking community in-put and the number one and two priorities were public access to the river and a boat launch.

We urge City Council and City staff to carefully consider setting aside from 151 Mt. Hope a designated roadway and parking to support the millions of dollars going into Erie Harbor Enhancement Phase II and particularly the innovative and expensive boat launch. Without an access road and adequate parking, the overall project is deficient. Now is the time to look at both Erie Harbor Enhancement Project and 151 Mt. Hope as inter-related. The parcel at 151 Mt. Hope is one of the last pieces of prime land in the City on the Genesee River. Providing public access to the river and adequate parking is essential. Let us not be short sighted in such a long needed and planned redevelopment of this community park.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

**Stantec Consulting Ltd.**

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